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IMPRESSIONS  
OF  
PRISON LIFE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

BY  
DAVID DYER.

Box 7.



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SUBMITTED

TO THE INSPECTORS AND SUPERINTENDENT OF  
THE ALBANY PENITENTIARY.

BY

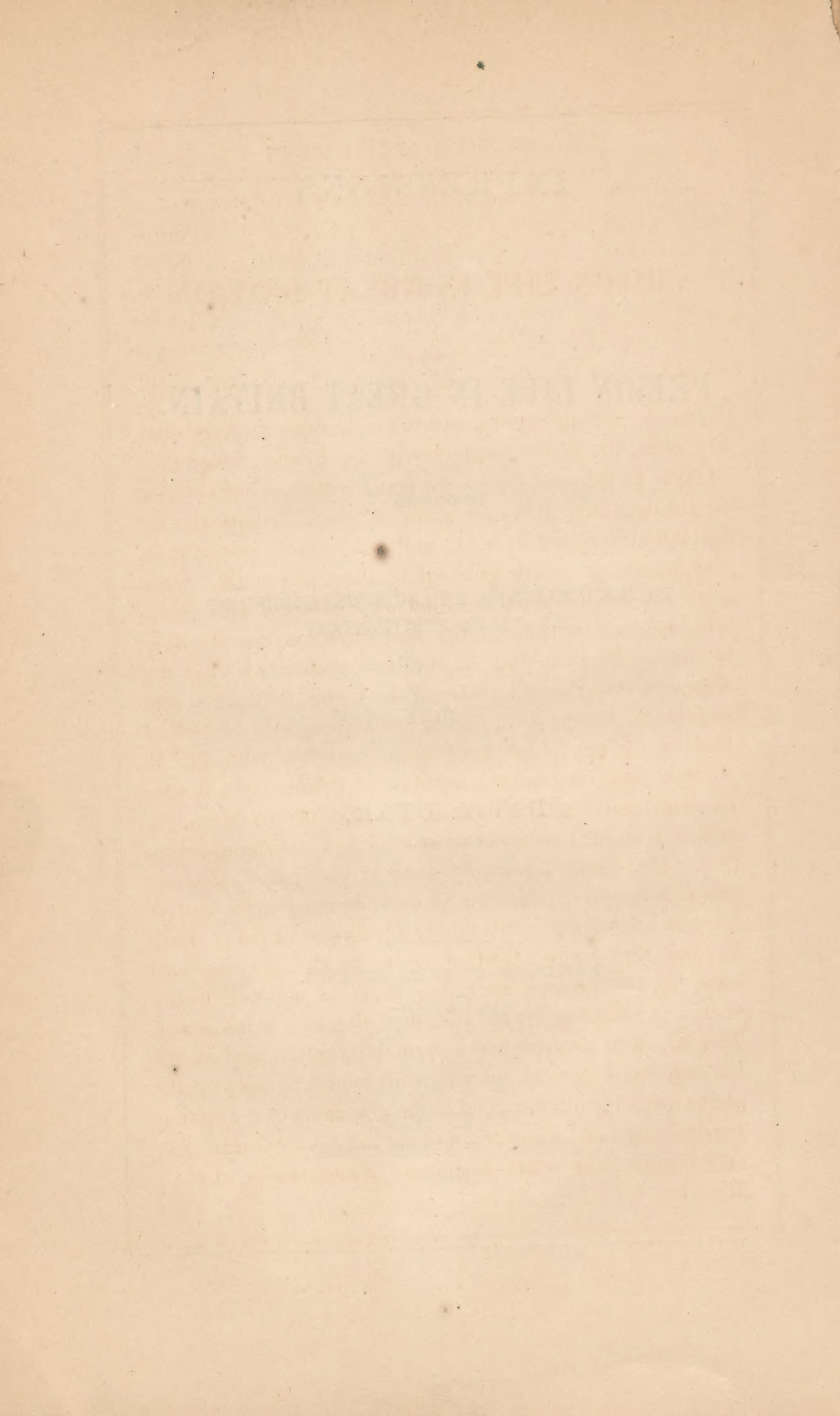
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DAVID DYER,  
CHAPLAIN.

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1868.





## PRISON LIFE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

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On the eve of my departure for Europe in April last, the Rev. Dr. Wines, secretary of the Prison Association of New York, kindly gave me some letters of introduction to distinguished philanthropists in Great Britain who are specially interested in penal and reformatory institutions, and urged my seeing as many of them as I could. Soon after my arrival there I called on Frederick Hill, Esq., who received me very kindly, and gave me introductions to George Everest, Esq., of the Home office who has the charge of the criminal affairs of the United Kingdom, and to John G. Perry, Esq., one of her Majesty's Inspectors of Prisons. From these gentlemen, together with H. P. Voules, Esq., the other Inspector of Prisons, Sir Walter Crofton, and Captain Barlow, Director of the Mountjoy prison, Dublin, I received most kind and courteous attention. Mr. Perry repeatedly assured me that *I could not trouble him*, and directed me to such representative institutions as he thought it most desirable for me to visit. Both he and Sir Walter Crofton wrote to the governors of some of the prisons informing them of my anticipated visit, and soliciting for me such attention as was necessary. This kindness secured me a cordial reception, and all the information I desired. I sincerely tender to each of the above named gentlemen, and to the governors of the prisons I visited, my most respectful and cordial acknowledgments, and I shall long retain a grateful remembrance of their attention.

In the prisons I visited, I observed much that merits commendation. The character and appearance of the buildings; the facilities which are provided for the daily exercise of the prisoners; the cleanliness which is everywhere apparent; the size and conveniencies of the cells; the efficient method of ventilation which generally prevails; the regular system of diet; the easy way of distributing rations; the regard paid to the complaints of prisoners; the way of appointing local inspectors to the borough and county prisons; the vigorous system of inspection which is maintained; the manner of appointing and training officers; the quiet way in which they generally discharge their duties; the entire absence of party politics; the prevalent recognition among the officers of personal responsibility; the daily maintenance of religious service; the holding of two services on the sabbath day, and many other things which meet the observing eye, excite feelings of admiration, and are worthy of imitation.

I was moreover delighted to find, as I repeatedly did, that instead of being satisfied with the improvements which have been already made, there is a determination among many enlightened and influential individuals to proceed with the work until whatever is necessary to self-support, and thorough efficiency shall be secured. Though the realization of this most desirable end will be a work of time, yet under the active and meliorating influence of Christianity, it will be, both here and there, attained.

I do not propose in this communication, which is written by special request, to dwell on the details of prison life in Great Britain, for that was not long since well and fully done by G. B. Hubbell, Esq., in the article he wrote, and which was published in the Twenty-second Annual Report of the Prison Association of New York. I shall simply state some of the impressions I received in the visits I lately made to the prisons there, in the hope of enlighten-



ing the public mind, and heightening public interest in prison management and work, in their relation to the convict, and the community; and I do this the more readily because of its obvious necessity.

1. I was much impressed with *the importance of earnestly using every means in our power to make crime detestable and to prevent its commission.* In the present imperfect state of human nature, and of society, there certainly will be among us vicious persons, violators of civil law, and depredators of public rights. We cannot wholly prevent this evil. But we should be deeply, intelligently, and earnestly intent on keeping their number as small as possible, by suppressing in every legitimate way the inducements to crime, by making it detestable, and by employing every means in our power to prevent its commission. This we owe to the individual and to society; and if the obligation is not fulfilled, the very worst consequences to both will ensue. It is, I assure you, impossible for any thoughtful man to become acquainted with criminal life in Great Britain, without being painfully conscious of this fact. The sight of so many large prisons, their nearness to each other, the great number of their inmates, the very large number of re-committals, and the shamelessness which is very frequently associated with the commission of crime, press this fact most powerfully on the mind and heart. As I walked one morning with a distinguished and well informed resident of Glasgow through one of its crowded streets leading to the prison, he directed my attention to the large number of young and middle aged persons who stood in the doorways, and on the sidewalks, adding, that probably every one, male and female, was a vicious character; known to be such to the police; that they made no secret of their course in life, and that their only aim was to escape arrest. In the prison, hard by, I was told by one of its officers there were then more than nine hundred convicts.

In London, it is well known, there are very large numbers of professional thieves, ranging from tender childhood to old age. There are well known streets which are full of them. They unblushingly and shamelessly avow their vocation, are seemingly free from all compunction of conscience on its account, and are hardened in crime. In visiting one day the City Prison, Holloway, its excellent governor, Mr. Weatherhead, directed my attention to his classification of prisoners, among which was one which comprehended criminals of this grade. I asked him, if they were numerous in London? He answered "Very." I said, "Are they dexterous in the commission of crime?" He replied, "Remarkably, it is almost impossible to detect them." I inquired, "Have they any sense of shame when detected?" He responded, "Not the least, they simply regard it as a mishap, which must be more carefully guarded against in future operations." To the question, "Have you any hope of their reformation by prison discipline?" He answered, "Not the least, they are so thoroughly obdurate." He then led me to the cells of several criminals of this character, and I instantly felt that their countenances indicated the correctness of his assertions.

Happily we have not in this country such large numbers of degenerate and utterly vicious characters. Crime is universally esteemed shameful. Its votaries shrink from the avowal of their occupation, and they dread the public odium which its known commission brings. But it must not be forgotten that the tendency with us is to the same mournful state, and this tendency is being constantly strengthened by the indulgence of evil passions, by the growing corruption of society, and by the combination of its own elements. As disease increases its power and threatening character by indulgence, and as fire burns and spreads more intensely by the increase and combination of its coals, so this tendency to social ruin is promoted by



the increasing numbers in society, by the strengthened indulgence of iniquity, and by the combination and concentration of vicious minds. These considerations and facts show the great importance of intelligently and zealously employing every means in our power to make crime detestable, and to prevent its commission.

2. Another impression which my visits to the prisons in Great Britain induced is *the importance of having proper conceptions of prison government*. It is to be feared that there are many persons there, as well as here, who have charge of penal institutions who feel that nearly all they have to do is to keep in proper custody and employment those committed to their care. This done they think their duty fully discharged. But this opinion, though widely prevalent, is very incorrect, and most injurious in its results. It quite overlooks the great end of imprisonment, and leads to the neglect of those opportunities for good which confinement affords.

Great numbers of those who are imprisoned inherit from a vicious parentage, appetites and dispositions which prompt to the commission of crime; they have also grown up among the depraved, and all their conceptions and associations are of that character. They have never been the objects of virtuous affection, nor enjoyed good moral or mental training. There are others who have yielded to crime under the pressure of strong temptation, which seized them as a strong man armed, and seemed impossible to resist. Now in their confinement they see their folly, their remorse is most bitter, and sometimes almost prompts them to despair. But whatever may be their particular character or experience, every convict presents a case of moral ruin—a ruin the greatest and most lamentable known to men. In each may be seen noble affections perverted, high expectations blasted, cherished hopes extinguished, and strong passions devoted to lust.

Every one has powers which should have been consecrated to God, and allied to the blessed ministries of heaven, but are now broken, lying in the dust, covered with the mire and filth of sin, infested with poison, and employed only for evil.

This is their condition, and must they remain so? Should those having the charge of our penal institutions be content to let them remain in this debased and injurious state? Should they suffer the weeks and months afforded for reflection on the past, and preparation for the future, to pass unimproved? Should they permit the evil passions, which have been long and banefully indulged, to gain strength during this time, that, when freedom is gained, they may break forth with greater power? Should they allow themselves, even though they may not be officially charged with the duty, to make no earnest effort for the restoration of these moral ruins? Certainly not. It is forbidden by every interest of society, by every obligation they owe to their fellow men, and by every conviction of loyalty to God. One great and governing purpose should animate every prison officer, and that to restore his charge to society, prepared by the blessing of God, for the discharge of his obligations, and determined to pursue whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. No work can be more interesting or important than this, and blessed will that individual be, who intelligently and prayerfully pursues it.

3. Closely allied with this was the deepened impression I received of the *great importance of constantly seeking the reformation of the convict, as the chief end of prison discipline.* I was pleased to find the following among the general rules which the officers of the prisons in Great Britain are required to observe. "The great object of reclaiming the criminal should always be kept in view by every officer in the prison, and they should strive to acquire a moral influ-



ence over the prisoners by performing their duties conscientiously, but without harshness. They should especially try to raise the prisoner's mind to a proper feeling of moral obligation by the example of their own uniform regard to truth and integrity, even in the smallest matters. Such conduct will, in most cases, excite the respect and confidence of the prisoners, and will make the duties of the officers more satisfactory to themselves, and more useful to the public."

This rule is good and truthful, and it may be extensively regarded; but, from what I saw, and heard, in the prisons I visited, I am compelled to fear that it is not. I would on no account knowingly express an erroneous judgment, but I observed very little in them to indicate that the reformation of the criminal is the regnant desire and aim. I doubt not but that the chaplains are faithful, and, generally, do what they can to secure this end; but the hearty and persistent cooperation of all the prison authorities is required, both there and here. Daniel Webster truthfully said: "Man is not only an intellectual, but he is also a moral being; and his religious feelings and habits require cultivation. Let the religious element in man's nature be neglected; let him be influenced by no higher motive than low, self-interest, and subjected to no stronger restraint than the limits of civil authority, and he becomes the creature of selfish passions and blind fanaticism. The cultivation of the religious sentiment represses licentiousness, incites to general benevolence and the practical acknowledgment of the brotherhood of men; inspires respect for law and order, and gives strength to the whole social fabric; at the same time it conducts the human soul upward to the Author of its being." Of all the attributes of man, the moral and religious are the most important and influential. They, by divine arrangement, have the precedence. They are designed to be the mainspring of thought and action,

the director of the whole man. Let them be neglected, debased, or treated as of secondary importance, and the whole system will be deranged. Readjustment, and reformation will be impossible. There may, indeed, be induced under the power of seclusion, or physical force, a servile fear; perverse passions may, for a time, be checked, and the developments of a depraved will may be stayed; but, let these appliances be removed, and it will soon become apparent that instead of promoting reformation they have induced spiritual hardness, recklessness and hate, and made the man a more inveterate slave to his passions, and a greater injury to the state. The moral and religious improvement of convicts should, therefore, be the first and constant aim *of all* to whose care they are committed. Their chief efforts should be directed to the sanctification of the springs of thought and action; and this secured, through the benediction of God, those objects of Christian solicitude will go forth to exemplify in virtuous lives the wisdom and utility of these efforts.

I would not, however, advocate the adoption of any questionable, or merely sensational measures, for the attainment of this desirable end; nor would I ask that it should interfere with the regular industry of the prisoners; but I would have it made, as in a Christian household, the prevalent temper of the institution: a reality of which every inmate should be conscious, which every one would quietly and willingly acknowledge, and the benign influence of which every one would feel. I would also have such facilities afforded for religious intercourse, and occasional social worship and instruction, in addition to the services of the sabbath, as may be necessary, and as practical wisdom may approve. The prevalence of this spirit and rule would, I am sure, not hinder but promote healthful discipline, productive industry, and lead to cheerful submission and service beyond what can be otherwise



secured. As elsewhere, there would be thus promoted, even in our prisons, and among our convicts diligence in business, and fervor of spirit towards the Lord.

4. As I passed through the prisons of Great Britain I was made to feel more deeply than before *that nothing should be said or done, and that no mode of employment should be enforced which would injure the prisoner's physical power, or degrade his moral sense.* It was gratifying to observe among the general rules that the officers are required to treat the prisoners with kindness and humanity, to listen patiently to their complaints and grievances, and not to speak to them in a harsh and irritating manner. This is right, and I would that a similar rule should everywhere prevail; but I am sure it does not, and I more than fear that habits of speech are indulged by some officers, in all our penal institutions, which are highly reprehensible, most irritating, which provoke the prisoner's worst passions, and sometimes lead him to violate prison rules. A man does not lose his natural feelings, nor his claim to civility by being a convict, and to treat him as though he had, is to make him feel that we reduce him to a level with the brute, and it never fails to excite in him a spirit of resentment, insubordination, and hate. That prison officer who is the more truly Christian in speech and action, will, other things being equal, always be the more efficient and successful.

I very much wish I could say that there is no kind of employment enforced in the prisons of Great Britain which is adapted to injure physical power, and degrade the moral sense. The forms of labor prevalent there, in addition to those which are necessary to the supply of prison wants, are crank turning, oakum picking, and the tread mill. In some institutions, some of the convicts are employed in weaving matting, and in breaking stones. Crank turning is most monotonous, affords not the least

mental exercise, and is entirely unproductive. The prisoner sits alone in his cell, and is required to turn the crank placed there about fourteen thousand times a day, while a dial on the outside indicates whether he has done so or not. This a form of hard labor which simply occupies his time, and is certainly not reformatory.

Oakum picking is simply pulling to pieces old rope, or reducing it, as nearly as fingers can do, to its fibrous state. This, though not useless, is employment for only the eyes and hands, and gives no occupation whatever to the mind. As I looked on numbers of active, intelligent young men so engaged, I felt that it was not in the least adapted to elevate their minds or reform their habits.

The treadmill is an immense wheel turned by the tread of men, for the purpose of raising water or working machinery. From one hundred to two hundred and fifty are engaged on it at a time, according to the force required.

The first of these I saw was at Winchester in the county prison of Hants, and it excited very much surprise, for I had supposed this form of labor was utterly reprehensible, and universally abandoned. On expressing this conviction to Sir Walter Crofton, who kindly took me through that otherwise admirably conducted prison, he assured me it was both necessary and useful, and with proper care not detrimental to health. I supposed that so excellent and enlightened a man, in prison matters, must have good reasons for his opinion, but I resolved on watching its effect elsewhere. Soon after, I visited the prison in Edinburgh, and, conversing with its governor, who is a gentleman of superior intelligence and experience, having held that office for more than twenty-five years, I asked him what he thought of the treadmill as an employment for convicts. He responded, "Most injurious, sir, it is killing to some men, and deteriorating to the minds and morals of all. This opinion was the result of trial, and was given with



decided emphasis. Subsequently, both in Liverpool and in London, I stood by the wheel and watched the men who came off to rest, after *working fifteen or twenty minutes*, and I needed no physician, or officer, to tell me that it was injurious to the health of many, for their physical exhaustion, their laborious breathing, and their profuse perspiration, were decisive proofs of its detrimental influence. I passed from the scene feeling from what I personally witnessed, that this labor must be injurious and demoralizing.

I am aware that it is found very difficult in Great Britain to procure suitable labor for convicts; but I am satisfied that by combination of thought and action among the friends of penal institutions there, these objectionable forms may be supplanted by others that shall be both useful and reformatory. If the convict cannot be taught a way whereby, on liberation, he may obtain an honest living, let him not be compelled to do that which may enfeeble him and make him dependent on charity, or dispose him to commit further depredations on the public welfare.

5. I was led more deeply than ever to *feel the inutility, as a general rule, of short sentences*. In the first visits I made, I was surprised to find so many persons confined for periods extending from two to seven days, during which time they were generally subject to low diet and hard labor. On inquiring the reason for such sentences and treatment, I was repeatedly told that the prevalent practice in Great Britain is to subject those who have been found guilty of petty offenses to a short, sharp, deterrent course of punishment, that they might be kept from the further commission of crime.

I asked if this was the practical result of this course, and was assured it was not, for that the number of re-committals, which are chiefly from this class of convicts, was very large, not less than thirty-nine per cent, and these have increased ten per cent in the last ten years.

I repeatedly inquired of different prison governors whether they thought such sentences generally useful, and the answer I invariably received was an emphatic *no*. Some added, they are baneful in their effect, and pointed to the large number of re-committals as proof. On asking what they would do with persons who had been repeatedly convicted and sentenced for short periods, they replied, "Make every additional offense a heightened aggravation, and impose a proportionate punishment."

This has been my conviction for several years. In some cases, where the transgressor was incautiously led into crime, or where there was no special aggravation, I think the magistrate may, having administered rebuke and counsel, advantageously suspend sentence, or impose a fine, or subject the culprit to ten days solitary confinement; but to repeat these short sentences of from two to seven days, perhaps several times a year, on hardened and persistent transgressors, is very injurious.

These are the sentiments of the Howard Association, a society formed in London for the improvement of prison discipline. They say, "These repeated short sentences are very mischievous. For further committals, there should be sentences of sufficient duration to form habits of labor, in collective industrial occupation, and to impart an ability to earn an honest living."

Earl Stanley, some years since, said, in an address on reformatory institutions: "It is proved by a concurrence of testimony, such as one rarely finds on any social question, admitting of dispute, that short imprisonments are not reformatory in their effect; that they are seldom even deterring, that usually they send back the offender more hardened than he went in. The difficulty is not to find witnesses on this point, but to choose them. I believe there is not a governor of a gaol, not a chaplain, not a judge, not a chairman of quarter sessions, who is not here



of one mind." I trust the time is not far distant when this united testimony will be practically regarded.

6. My visits to the prisons of Great Britain deepened my conviction of *the influence of good laws in lessening the amount of crime*. When passing through the prison in Edinburgh my attention was called by the governor to the fact that the number of prisoners had decreased more than one-third since the enforcement of the Forbes-McKenzie Act, which compels the closing of drinking houses every night at eleven o'clock, and from that hour on Saturday night till seven o'clock on Monday morning. On inquiring the reason for this decrease, he answered, "It is found in the beneficent operation of that righteous act." Just before its passage in 1853, the magistrates of Edinburgh passed a resolution appropriating £12,000 for the enlargement of the prison, *but that made the expenditure unnecessary*. Then the number of prisoners was five hundred and seventy-nine, and had been constantly increasing; since, it has constantly decreased, and now has but three hundred and sixty-seven. This fact most significantly shows the influence of good laws in decreasing crime, and yet it is only one of many which the intelligent observer will meet.

Here is another still more striking. The following petition from the prisoners in the County House of Correction, at Preston, in Lancashire, was lately presented by the Earl of Harrowby to the House of Lords:

*"The petition of the undersigned prisoners in the County House of Correction, at Preston, in Lancashire, humbly sheweth,*

*"That your petitioners have had painful experience of the miseries, bodily and spiritual, produced by beer-houses, and are fully assured that those places constitute the greatest obstacles to the social, moral and religious progress of the laboring classes \* \* \** By frequenting them, parents bring their families to disgrace and ruin, and children are familiarized with vice and crime. \* \* \* *Your petitioners have all been drawn into offenses and crimes of which they might otherwise have remained innocent. We speak from our own direct and bitter knowledge, when we declare that*

beer-houses lead to Sabbath breaking, blasphemy, fraud, robbery, stabbings, manslaughters and murders.

“Your petitioners, therefore, desiring that others may be saved from the fate which has overtaken them, humbly, but most earnestly, pray that your Lordships would be pleased to take such measures as will, on the one hand, lead to the entire suppression of the beer-house curse, and on the other, promote whatever may hold out the prospect of wholesome and rational amusement for the working population of the kingdom.”

Signed by 247, male prisoners.

“This petition,” said the late Rev. John Clay, chaplain of the House of Correction at Preston, a man as eminent for his integrity as for his labors and philanthropy, “was drawn up after I had carefully read upward of eighty written statements, by as many different prisoners, and was, as far as I could make it so, a digest of those statements. \* \* \* As to the signatures themselves, I believe none were ever more heartily attached to a petition than these.”

But the evils of this iniquitous traffic are even more extensively baneful in the intellectual and moral condition of the children of the victims of intemperance. The Rev. W. C. Osborne, the excellent chaplain of Bath Goal, who has for many years devoted much attention to the condition of juvenile delinquents, calculates that about *ten thousand* children are annually sent to prison, and that by far the largest number of these are the offsprings of intemperate parents. In illustration and proof of this, the Rev. Dr. Guthrie, who has done so much for the support and promotion of ragged schools, says in his *Sketches of the Cowgate* :

Look at the history of the children of Edinburgh, in the original ragged school, as detailed in one of the annual reports :

Found homeless,	-	-	-	-	-	72
With the father dead,	-	-	-	-	-	140
Mother dead,	-	-	-	-	-	89
Deserted by parents,	-	-	-	-	-	43
With one or both parents transported,	-	-	-	-	-	9
Fatherless, with drunken mothers,	-	-	-	-	-	77
Motherless, with drunken fathers,	-	-	-	-	-	66
With both parents worthless,	-	-	-	-	-	84
Who have been beggars,	-	-	-	-	-	271
Known or believed to be the children of thieves,	-	-	-	-	-	224



What a horrible array of vice and wretchedness, and all mainly attributable to the baneful, though *legalized* facilities for procuring intoxicating drinks.

There are other laws on the statute books, both of Great Britain and the United States which have a like demoralizing tendency; but there is not room for further illustration, and the above will perhaps suffice to draw the attention of some active minds to the relation which good laws have to the diminution of vice.

7. When inspecting the prisons of Great Britain I could not help feeling *the importance of using the prisoner to the utmost legitimate extent as the instrument of his own reformation.* This is, as it seemed to me, the very spirit of the celebrated Irish system, which was introduced by Sir Walter Crofton to the Mountjoy and associate prisons in Ireland, with the details of which I was most kindly made acquainted by Captain Barlow, her majesty's present director in Dublin. That system, while it throws no false guise over crime, has no expression of revenge, does not simply seek restitution for the wrongs done to society, nor the exaction of so much suffering for so much sin. But it recognizes the manhood of the transgressor, his possession of moral sense, and subjection to its power. It seeks to impress his mind with the wrongfulness of his conduct; with the fact that his degradation and sufferings are self-inflicted; that his own interests demand, and are associated with his reformation; that he can do very much towards securing it, and it constantly aids his efforts in that direction. It tries to save him for himself and for society. It says, to use the words of Mr. Hubbell, "Let us lift him up. Let us inquire into the nature of his case. Perhaps he is not entirely lost yet. Perhaps he can yet stand. The man, though doubting as to the reality of kindness, begins to be reassured. Mercy speaks kindly to him. Benevolence undertakes the labor of teaching

him. Justice deals firmly but compassionately with him. The heavy iron gate of the inner prison opens, and he is allowed to step out. He is now trusted and encouraged. The pleasant paths of wisdom are made plain to him, and he begins to feel a desire to walk therein. By a course of obedience and good conduct, he gains the confidence of justice, who opens a second gate, and the once bruised and cowering felon passes to another stage, where greater freedom is allowed him. Thus step by step he is encouraged, instructed, lifted up, till, when the time comes to allow him to pass the last iron gate, he has but a gentle step to take, and he finds a place and takes it in the society of virtuous and useful men. No fetters, or bars, or iron gates could hold Peter longer in prison, when the angel of justice, mercy and truth had appeared to release him. The criminal now may be trusted on his honor," and he passes to the full enjoyment of freedom, not soured, disheartened, or hardened, but with thankfulness to God that he has been subjected to such healthful and reformatory restraints and influences.

Such appeared to me to be the spirit and tendency of the Irish convict system. I do not say it can be adopted in all its details in the United States; but, whether it can be or not, there certainly ought to be, and should be, one equally just, philosophical, and Christian. This is demanded by the interests of the convict, of society, and by the requirements of God, and I trust those who are seeking the improvement of our prison discipline will not rest till it is secured. Let us have a system in which punishment and pecuniary profit shall be subordinate to reformation; which shall nurture and develop the moral affections and sentiments of the human soul, and shall thoroughly engage the dispositions and efforts of the criminal for the realization of its great end.



8. In connection with this particular, I was also impressed in passing through the prisons of Great Britain *with the importance of having officers of the right character and qualifications.* I have great pleasure in saying that several of the governors and chaplains I saw, appeared to be eminently fitted for their positions, and devoted to their duties. But it was not so with all. And I see not how, with the rule of appointment which is there generally regarded, the evil can be prevented. For while party politics are not allowed, as they do too frequently with us, to control appointments, yet social, family, and ecclesiastical connections have great power. No person, however high his qualifications, is eligible for a prison chaplaincy in England, who is not a clergyman of the established, or Episcopal church; nor in Scotland, who does not belong to the established Presbyterian church. The consequence is that this office is not unfrequently filled by gentlemen who, though otherwise excellent, are destitute of the necessary qualifications, and whose cherished tastes and habits hinder their cultivation. Such appointments are unwise, and often baneful; for no system, however good, will be efficiently carried out by persons who are not in sympathy with it. The preaching of the gospel in a perfunctory way, will never penetrate a convict's heart. Everywhere it is of very doubtful utility, but in a prison it does harm, and excites aversion, rather than love to the truth. God employs in the accomplishment of his gracious plans for the sinner's good, instruments in sympathy with himself, who possess his mind, express his spirit, and delight in doing his work. This is the example he would have us follow, and nowhere is it more important than among prisoners. It has been truthfully said by the gentleman whose words have been already quoted: "The development of moral sentiments in the human heart, and everything good and noble in the human character, is determined in a far greater degree by sympa-

thy and by silent or unspoken influence and example, than by formal precepts and instruction; and in no place or branch of human society is this position more applicable than in the management and training of those who are deprived of liberty for the violation of human laws. Hence the transcendent importance of honest, virtuous, able officers at the head of all large penal institutions. Men of high powers of mind, great executive ability, and long and varied experience, are the only ones who can be safely trusted in such positions. Such men placed at the head of the great penal institutions of our land, with freedom to act, would change their moral tone and general character in a very brief space of time. If the chief officer be known to possess the requisite qualifications in point of talent, virtue and experience, his every act will have a mighty influence for good over the whole establishment. He may speak but little, only enough to make his wishes known, and yet what he says will be felt in every part of the institution. If a subordinate officer should hear him speak kindly to a prisoner, giving encouragement to his every effort to improve, welcoming every act of obedience, and offering assistance at every step of advancement, there would arise at once a kindly feeling in his own heart towards all the poor degraded creatures within the prison; a feeling born of sympathy and nourished by that same excellent aliment. The prisoner being on his part placed under the same kind of a regime, would naturally be moved by the same influences to act in the same spirit; and thus would spring up that mutual good will, sympathy and cooperation between officers and prisoners, which are essential elements and agencies in any penal institution that shall be truly reformatory."

9. I was much interested and impressed by *the efforts made in Great Britain to give instruction to prisoners*. This is far more generally attended to there than in the United States.

Every prison I saw had a school room, and a regular school master; some had an assistant school master, and a school mistress for the females. All the prisoners needing instruction were obliged to attend. In some of the prisons, the time devoted to instruction is one hour, for three days each week, and in others, one hour every day. Reading, writing, and arithmetic, are the branches taught, and the prisoners generally seem anxious to learn. I went into several of these school rooms when the prisoners were assembled for instruction, and was permitted to examine their books. The sight was very gratifying; and while I felt that some, from age or long indulged ignorance, would gain but little benefit, the looks of others assured me they had received great good.

At the Mountjoy prison in Dublin, I found that much attention is paid to the mental improvement of the prisoners. There is an accomplished head school master, who has one or more assistants; and the prison schools are subject to the supervision of the national school inspectors, and are highly commended by them. This attention to instruction is maintained through each grade of the Irish convict system, and is largely increased in the third or last. Then, in addition to regular daily school lessons, the convict hears five lectures each week by Mr. James Organ, who has been appointed to this service by the authorities, and is fully competent to the task. These lectures, judging from what I heard, are of an interesting and instructive character, delivered in a style to enlist the convict's attention, enlarge his thoughts, and deepen his desire for knowledge, and love of truth. I was delighted to mark the indications, given on the occasion of my visit to the Smithfield prison, of awakened intellect, and a higher manhood, consequent on the training they had received under this Irish system.



I would that all the criminals in our penal institutions who cannot read and write were placed under such a course of instruction, and taught how they may instruct themselves. I know that many of them are painfully ignorant, and that this, in many instances, has led them to vice and imprisonment. To educate them is the obvious duty of the state, and if thoroughly done would be followed with happy results. I long for the time when the system of prison discipline suggested by Mr. Haynes, warden of the Massachusetts state prison, shall be adopted throughout the United States. He says: "The leading object should be reformation, and my agencies would be proper religious services, educating the ignorant, giving all who were deficient a good trade, surrounding them with officers in whom they would have confidence, prohibiting all irritating language, giving them frequent opportunities for exercise and recreation, endeavoring to fan into a flame the slightest spark of manhood that they might bring into prison, and finally, when, in my judgment, they deserved it, to discharge them conditionally—always bearing in mind that they were men, made in God's own image, with minds to be improved, and with souls to save."

10. I was greatly surprised in my visits to learn *how very little the prisons in Great Britain generally yield to their own support*. I am aware that the hindrances to self-support there are much greater than in the United States. But I could not suppress the conviction that they might be made to approximate much nearer to it than at present, should the great and good men of that country more generally turn their thoughts to the subject.

I was astonished when informed by Mr. Tallack, the excellent secretary of the Howard Association, that, taking the average of England and Wales every prisoner cost the country more than £30 per annum, while the average

result of prison labor was under £2 per prisoner. At Exeter county gaol, where the male prisoners are employed in breaking stones, their average earnings have not exceeded one farthing per head per day for the last five years. Mr. J. T. Hibbert, M. P., says he found in one gaol the expense per prisoner, where there was a considerable number of them, was £79 per man, and that the time had come when the country were spending between two or three millions sterling on crime.

That this state of things is susceptible of great improvement, even there, I have no doubt, for I found some prisons that are approaching to self-support. The objection to the adoption of those industrial measures whereby it might be secured, is, that it would create an unfair competition with outside labor. But this I am obliged to regard as unfounded, for the number of prisoners is so small, compared with the public outside, that the competition, if it did exist, would be scarcely felt. Then, if they do not earn something towards their support, the rate-payers must pay the whole expense, and they will come forth from their confinement to commit fresh depredations on the public interests. It is of the first importance that prisons should be made as nearly as possible self-supporting. I am sure it will not hinder, but promote, the great end of prison discipline; and I trust that public opinion will soon be so far enlightened that present prejudice will be abandoned, and that measures, which shall secure this end, will be universally regarded as advantageous both to the convict and to society.

Finally, my visits to the prisons in Great Britain deepened my conviction of *the need and importance of greater care for discharged prisoners*. I regret to say that generally this matter receives but little attention, except in connection with the Mountjoy prison in Dublin. There a complete supervision is effectually and most successfully maintained.

But elsewhere, as with us generally in the United States, the prisoner is left on his discharge entirely to himself, and not unfrequently soon falls again into crime. In some places, however, there is something done for their aid by benevolent individuals or societies. The most exemplary instance of this kind I found was at Wakefield in Yorkshire. There the excellent governor of the prison showed me a large house that had, for a considerable time, been rented as a temporary industrial home for those who were desirous, on their discharge, of work, but who could not obtain it.

There the inmates are kept employed and receive such wages as enable them to pay the very reasonable charge for board and lodging, and to save a little for future wants. The persons who are admitted to this home are prisoners discharged from the Yorkshire West Riding prison at Wakefield, who apply for admission within fourteen days of their discharge. No temptation is offered to remain long in it, but on the contrary the purpose to obtain work elsewhere is encouraged. In consequence the wages paid are not quite as good as those received by working men in the district around, and no one is allowed to remain beyond a certain time. This home is under the general supervision of the governor of the prison who takes great interest therein. It is admirably managed. Last year there were admitted one hundred and twenty-six persons, one hundred and nineteen of whom were discharged prisoners, and seven were destitute persons from the town.

I was greatly gratified to find a similar home had been provided for discharged female convicts, and that the excellent lady of the governor devoted much time to its welfare. This also was in a prosperous condition and doing much good.



Such efforts for the welfare of discharged convicts are an individual and public benefaction; for the period of their liberation is peculiarly critical. Their good intentions and actual improvement in prison are then severely tested. The question is then to be decided whether they shall pursue the path of virtue, or return again to crime. A few weeks will commonly decide the point. The trial is often terribly severe to the poor liberated convict. The temptations which surround him are very strong and pressing. There is a great conflict in his soul. He wishes to do right, but is strongly urged to do wrong. He wishes to stand, but knowing his weakness he fears he shall fall. He would do good, but evil is present with him. At such a time he specially needs some kindly influence thrown around him, and some friendly hand extended for his aid. These he ought to have. The public owe the benefaction to him and to themselves. It is necessary to the consummation of their reformatory measures. And it is all but essential to the prevalence of his good purposes and habits. If it is afforded, he will probably be kept from the path of crime, and pursue that of industry and virtue; but if it is withheld, all previous efforts for his amendment will likely fail, he will become more hardened in sin, more embittered against society, and will return with greater violence to criminal pursuits. May the time soon come, when there shall everywhere be exercised a wise and beneficent care of those who have been discharged from the prison house.







